

Transitions

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Summary: What if the accident in the test chamber had never occurred? Was the arrival of the aliens just a freak consequence of the accident, or something more sinister? I don't own any of the copyrights. Please don't hurt me.

Transitions

"Welcome to the Black Mesa transit system," said a loudspeaker in the electric tram. Gordon Freeman crossed his legs and scowled at the speaker. He'd had a poor night's sleep, and the last thing he needed now was a chipper voice over the loudspeaker reminding him about the Hazard Course decathlon, or whatever damned thing the Administrator thought he should be reminded of.

The tram chattered along noisily, along the seemingly endless track. Freeman had seen all this before. He'd taken this route twice to get himself oriented, and he now realized that he was going to have to see the same boring sights every morning for as long as he had to work in Anomalous Materials. He sighed and shrank back into his seat, cleaning his glasses on his shirt.

But as he passed the "fishbowl", the elevated glass-walled cafeteria in Area 3, Freeman regained interest in his day. That tall, creepy guy with the briefcase and the blue suit was standing in a motionless tram, talking to one of the high-ranking researchers. Freeman had seen this three times already, and it was starting to bother him. The creepy guy turned and looked at Freeman's tram as it passed, halting his conversation as if he had been discussing something secret. Freeman made sure to look uninterested.

After the seemingly endless tram ride, Freeman arrived at the Sector C Test Labs. Maybe, since he had finally gotten all his paperwork straightened out, be able to do some science. He had only joined Black Mesa for the science in the first place, but he also had to deal with ties and shiny shoes and a maze of security every day. Life seemed like a long hassle to him lately.

"Morning, Mr. Freeman. Looks like you're running late today," said the security officer. Freeman waited impatiently behind the door until the guard could clumsily enter the access code.

Freeman trotted to the door and waited for the idiot security guard to open that as well, and he finally had access to the Test Labs.

"H'lo, Mr. Freeman," said the security officer at the desk, "I had a bunch of messages for you, but I sent them to your office. Oh, yeah, you're supposed to go right to the test chamber once you get into your hazard suit."

Freeman jogged to the locker room. He hadn't realized he was late until the guard notified him. After opening the glass case containing his HEV, he slipped it on, and waited while the incredibly droning voice of the suit rambled about all the safety features. The moment it was finished, Freeman headed to the Test Lab control booth. There were four scientists inside, and they all seemed quite involved.

"Hello, Gordon," said one.

"We've just sent the sample down to the test chamber," said another.

"We boosted the anti-mass spectrometer to one hundred five percent. Bit of a gamble, but we need the extra resolution," said the senior researcher, Dr. Bell.

"The administrator is very concerned we get a conclusive analysis of today's sample. I gather they went to some length to get it," said the fourth scientist. They let him into the higher-security areas beyond the control room, and he quickly headed to the test chamber. As he approached the test chamber airlock, Freeman had a cold sense of foreboding, and he stopped short. The two scientists waiting for him inside glared at his hesitation, and he marched into the airlock.

"We'll be deviating a bit from standard analysis procedures today, Gordon," said Dr. Hendricks, a tall, sickly man who reminded Freeman a little of the odd, creepy businessman he'd seen talking to the doctor on the stopped tram. But he knew Dr. Hendricks was only as creepy as he looked. He was a diminutive and cowardly weakling with an extraordinary brain. Freeman realized he'd been daydreaming, tuning out the dialogue between Dr. Hendricks and the other doctor, and he snapped back to reality.

"Let's let Gordon in now," said the elderly, unfamiliar scientist. It took two researchers with high-level clearance to open that enormous door into the test chamber, because the samples involved were incredibly valuable, and the energies involved were considered enormously dangerous to anyone without an HEV suit.

There was a series of mechanical and electrical clicks.

Then the huge door hissed open.

End
file.